Authors of Antiquity: A Chronological Reference

How these authors shaped what we know of the ancient past

Author	Full Name	Dates	Written Language	Spoken Languages	Under Whose Rule	Key Works	Notes
Sanchoniatho	Sakunyatan Phoenician: Sknyt Gk: Σαγχουνιάθων	~1200-1000 BC?	Phoenician	Phoenician	Phoenician city-states; pre-Trojan War era; possibly under Hiram I of Tyre	Phoenician History	Known only through Philo of Byblos fragments preserved by Eusebius; based work on secret temple inscriptions
Herodotus	Herodotus of Halicarnassus Gk: Ἡρόδοτος	c.484-425 BC	Greek	Greek; traveled through Egypt, Persia, Babylonia, Scythia	Greek city-states; lived in Athens under Pericles; later Thurii colony	The Histories (9 books)	Called 'Father of History' by Cicero; first systematic prose historian; covered Greco-Persian Wars and extensive ethnography of Egypt, Persia, Babylonia and beyond; Manetho wrote Against Herodotus directly in response to him; later criticized by Plutarch and Strabo for inaccuracies; foundational narrative that all subsequent ancient historians worked within or against
Manetho	Manethon of Sebennytos Egyptian name lost Gk: Μανέθων	fl. 290-260 BC	Greek	Egyptian (native); Greek; read hieroglyphics	Ptolemy I Soter & Ptolemy II Philadelphus (Ptolemaic Kingdom)	Aegyptiaca; The Sacred Book; Against Herodotus; On Festivals; On Ancient Ritual; Book of Sothis	Priest at Heliopolis; original texts lost; preserved via Josephus, Eusebius, Africanus; name may mean 'Gift/Truth/Beloved of Thoth'; helped establish cult of Serapis; Aegyptiaca commissioned by Ptolemy I Soter, founder of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt; in Aegyptiaca he described the Hyksos as a Semitic people who invaded and ruled northern Egypt c.1650-1550 BC before being expelled — his account became the primary ancient source for the Hyksos; later writers including Josephus used Manetho's Hyksos account to argue a direct connection to the biblical Israelites
Berossus	Bel-reushunu (Akkadian) Gk: Βηρωσσός	c.330-250 BC	Greek (Koine)	Akkadian (native); Greek; read cuneiform	Seleucid Empire — Antiochus I Soter	Babyloniaca (3 books)	Priest of Bel-Marduk, Babylon; original texts lost; preserved via Josephus, Eusebius, Syncellus; mirrors Manetho — Babylonian priest writing national history in Greek
Eratosthenes	Eratosthenes of Cyrene Gk: Ἐρατοσθένης	276-194 BC	Greek	Greek	Ptolemy III Euergetes & successive Ptolemaic rulers	Geographica; On the Measurement of the Earth; Chronographies	Chief librarian, Library of Alexandria

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Philo of Byblos	Herennius Philon Gk: Φίλων Βύβλιος Lat: Philo Byblius	c.64-141 AD	Greek	Greek; Phoenician	Roman Empire — Trajan & Hadrian	Phoenician History (trans. of Sanchoniatho); On the Acquisition of Books; On Cities and Famous Men; Life of Hadrian	Key link preserving Sanchoniatho; Roman citizen; fragments preserved by Eusebius
Philo of Alexandria	Philo Judaeus Gk: Fnlwn n nlexandrenV	c.20 BC-50 AD	Greek	Greek; Hebrew; Aramaic	Roman Empire — Augustus through Claudius; Jewish community of Alexandria	On the Creation; Allegorical Interpretation; On Abraham; Embassy to Gaius	Jewish philosopher; bridged Greek and Hebrew thought; influenced early Christian theology; led Jewish delegation to Emperor Caligula; wrote extensively about the divine Logos as God's firstborn and intermediary between God and the world — this theological concept, fully developed by Philo in Greek before the Gospels existed, appears directly in Gospel of John 1:1 'In the beginning was the Logos' — documenting that the concept predates the Gospel text
Saul of Tarsus (St. Paul)	Saul of Tarsus / St. Paul / Paulus Gk: Παῦλος	5-64/65 AD	Greek	Greek; Aramaic; Hebrew; Latin	Roman Empire — Claudius (during missions); Nero (executed under)	Romans; 1 & 2 Corinthians; Galatians; Philippians; 1 Thessalonians; Philemon; Ephesians; Colossians; 2 Thess.; 1 & 2 Timothy; Titus; Hebrews (disputed)	Roman citizen; never met Jesus; actively persecuted early Christians — consented to and witnessed stoning of Stephen (Acts 7-8); claimed singular conversion experience on road to Damascus with no independent witnesses; became primary architect of Christian theology despite no direct contact with Jesus; 7 epistles undisputed by scholars; 6 disputed; his letters predate the Gospels
Josephus	Yosef bar Matityahu Titus Flavius Josephus Gk: Ἰώσηπος	37-100 AD	Greek	Aramaic (native); Greek; Hebrew; Latin	Roman Empire — Vespasian, Titus, Domitian (Flavian dynasty)	The Jewish War; Antiquities of the Jews; Against Apion; Life of Flavius Josephus	Born Yosef bar Matityahu; Roman client historian. Father's name Matityahu = Matthew. In Against Apion, Josephus explicitly argued the Hyksos were the ancestors of the Israelites, using Manetho's own account as his primary source — a direct and documented author-to-author connection. Some researchers theorize Josephus authored the Gospel of Matthew, citing: his father's name Matityahu (= Matthew), structural parallels between Jewish War (7 books) and Matthew's 28 chapters (4x7), shared Greek authorship, Roman patronage, and no claimed author in original manuscripts. Not accepted by mainstream scholarship but subject of ongoing independent research.

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Pliny the Elder	Gaius Plinius Secundus	23-79 AD	Latin	Latin; Greek	Roman Empire — Vespasian (died at Vesuvius eruption)	Natural History (37 books)	Roman author and naturalist; encyclopedic knowledge of the ancient world; died observing eruption of Vesuvius
Tacitus	Publius (or Gaius) Cornelius Tacitus	56-120 AD	Latin	Latin; Greek	Roman Empire — Domitian through Trajan	Annals; Histories; Agricola; Germania	Roman senator and historian; mentions Christians and Nero's persecution; one of few non-Christian sources referencing Jesus
Julius Africanus	Sextus Iulius Africanus Gk: Σέξτος Ἰούλιος Ἀφρικανός	c.160-240 AD	Greek	Greek; Latin; Hebrew	Roman Empire — Septimius Severus through Alexander Severus	Chronographiai (5 vols); Kestoi/Embroideries (24 vols)	First Christian universal history; Eusebius built Chronicle on it; called 'Libyan philosopher'; divided history into 7 epochal weeks; calculated Creation at 5,499 BC
Tertullian	Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus	155-220 AD	Latin	Latin; Greek	Roman Empire — Marcus Aurelius through Caracalla	Apologeticus; Against Marcion; On the Soul	Early Christian theologian; born Carthage
Origen	Origen Adamantius Gk: Ὠριγένης	184-253 AD	Greek	Greek; Hebrew; Latin	Roman Empire — Septimius Severus through Decius	On First Principles; Against Celsus; Hexapla; Commentaries on Scripture	Early Christian theologian; Alexandria and Caesarea; later declared heretical by the Church
Clement of Alexandria	Titus Flavius Clemens Gk: Κλήμης ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεύς	c.150-215 AD	Greek	Greek; likely Latin	Roman Empire — Commodus through Septimius Severus	Protrepticus; Paedagogus; Stromata; Quis Dives Salvetur	Born pagan, Athens; head of Catechetical School Alexandria; teacher of Origen; attempted to reconcile Greek philosophy with Christianity; notably shared Flavian name Titus Flavius Clemens with Josephus (Titus Flavius Josephus) — scholars note this cannot have been accidental; used Josephus extensively; removed from Roman saints list due to unorthodox writings

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Polycarp	Polycarp of Smyrna Gk: Πολύκαρπος Lat: Polycarpus	c.69-155 AD	Greek	Greek	Roman Empire — Trajan through Antoninus Pius	Epistle to the Philippians; Martyrdom of Polycarp	Bishop of Smyrna; disciple of John the Apostle; teacher of Irenaeus; combated Gnosticism; name means 'fruitful' in Greek; martyred by sword after flames miraculously failed to touch him; last known person to have known an apostle directly; documented by Eusebius; bridges apostolic and patristic periods
Eusebius	Eusebius of Caesarea Gk: Εὐσέβιος	260-340 AD	Greek	Greek	Roman Empire — Diocletian through Constantine I	Ecclesiastical History; Chronicle; Preparation for the Gospel; Life of Constantine	Bishop of Caesarea; preserved many lost texts; built Chronicle on Africanus; Jerome later translated and extended his Chronicle into Latin, transmitting his work to the Western Church; widely regarded by historians as Constantine's court theologian and chief propaganda apparatus — his Life of Constantine is considered hagiography rather than objective history; present at Council of Nicaea 325 AD
Jerome	Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus Lat: Hieronymus	347-420 AD	Latin; Greek; Hebrew	Latin; Greek; Hebrew; Aramaic	Roman Empire — Theodosius I through Honorius	Vulgate Bible; De Viris Illustribus; Letters; Commentaries	Translated and extended Eusebius's Chronicle into Latin, transmitting it to the Western Church; translated Bible into Latin (Vulgate); standard Catholic Bible for centuries; directly influenced by and built upon Eusebius's scholarship
Augustine of Hippo	Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis	354-430 AD	Latin	Latin; Greek; some Punic	Roman Empire (late) — Theodosius I through Honorius; Bishop of Hippo	Confessions; City of God; On Christian Doctrine; On the Trinity	Most influential theologian of Western Christianity; shaped doctrine of original sin and just war; in Sermo CCXL, 4 Augustine documented that pagans of his era, suspicious that Christian texts were fabricated by Christians, preferred to trust Jewish sources over Christian ones as more credible witnesses to Christ — a documented 5th century acknowledgment of widespread skepticism about Christian textual authenticity
George Syncellus	Georgios Synkellos Gk: Γεώργιος Σύγκελλος	fl. 8th c.; d. after 810 AD	Greek	Greek	Byzantine Empire — Constantine VI; Patriarch Tarasius of Constantinople	Ekloge Chronographias (Extract of Chronography)	Key preserver of Manetho, Africanus, and Eusebius fragments; chronicle runs from Creation to Diocletian
Ole Borch (Borrichius)	Olaus Borrichius Ole Borch	1626-1690 AD	Latin; Danish	Latin; Danish; likely Greek	Kingdom of Denmark — Frederick III & Christian V	De ortu et progressu chemiae; Hermetis Aegyptiorum et chemicorum sapientia	Royal physician; defender of Hermeticism; believed in philosophers' stone; Danish polyhistor

Other Authors of Interest

Additional figures relevant to the study of antiquity and the transmission of knowledge

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Hipparchus	Hipparchus of Nicaea Gk: Ἵππαρχος	c.190-120 BC	Greek	Greek	Kingdom of Bithynia; Roman Republic (later career)	Commentary on Aratus and Eudoxus (only surviving work); Star Catalogue; Trigonometry tables (all others lost)	Greatest ancient astronomical observer; founder of trigonometry; discovered precession of equinoxes; drew on Babylonian sources; works known only through Strabo, Pliny the Elder, and Ptolemy
Cicero	Marcus Tullius Cicero Lat: Cicero	106-43 BC	Latin	Latin; Greek	Roman Republic — Julius Caesar, Pompey, Marc Antony era; served as Roman Senator and Consul	De Re Publica; De Legibus; De Natura Deorum; De Officiis; De Oratore; Orations (In Verrem, In Catilinam); Letters	Greatest orator of the Roman Republic; first to render Greek philosophy fully into Latin; named Herodotus 'Father of History'; reproduced theories of Stoic and Epicurean philosophers whose own works did not survive; his writings influenced Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers including Locke, Hume, Montesquieu and Jefferson; executed by Marc Antony — head and hands nailed to the Rostra
Plutarch	Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus Gk: Πλούταρχος	c.46-120 AD	Greek (Koine)	Greek; Latin	Roman Empire — Nero through Hadrian; priest at Temple of Apollo, Delphi; appointed procurator of Achaea by Hadrian	Parallel Lives (46 biographies); Moralia (70+ essays); On the E at Delphi; On Oracles at Delphi; On the Obsolescence of Oracles	Middle Platonist philosopher and biographer; priest at Delphi — deeply connected to mystery religion traditions; paired Greek and Roman figures in biography; Roman citizen; acquainted with emperors Trajan and Hadrian; criticized Herodotus; 227 works catalogued, many lost; strongly influenced European biography and historical writing from 16th-19th centuries
Strabo	Strabo of Amaseia Gk: Στράβων	c.64 BC-24 AD	Greek	Greek; likely Latin	Roman Empire — Augustus & Tiberius	Geographica (17 books); Historical Memoirs (43 books, lost)	'Strabo' means 'squinter' in Latin; born Amaseia, Pontus (modern Turkey); Roman citizen; staunch supporter of Roman imperialism; critiqued Eratosthenes and Hipparchus; traveled widely; only extant work covering all peoples and countries known to Greeks and Romans under Augustus

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Claudius Ptolemy	Claudius Ptolemaeus Gk: Κλαύδιος Πτολεμαῖος	c.100-170 AD	Greek (Koine)	Greek; Latin	Roman Empire — Hadrian through Marcus Aurelius; based in Alexandria	Almagest (13 books); Tetrabiblos (astrology); Geographia; Harmonics; Optics	Greco-Roman mathematician, astronomer, astrologer, geographer and music theorist; built heavily on Hipparchus; geocentric model dominated astronomy for 1,500 years; also wrote on astrology — Tetrabiblos was standard astrological text for centuries; some scholars have questioned whether he manipulated observational data to fit his model